

BIZARRE BEYOND BELIEF

ARTS x CULTURE x MAGAZINE



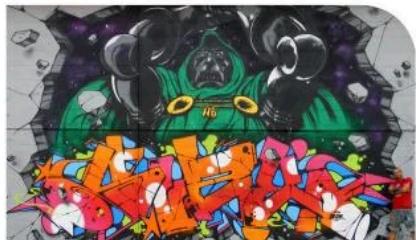
Issue #11



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ARTS x CULTURE x MAGAZINE

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ZEUS40



XRAY



ANSER



DICK CHERRY



MIKAEL B/KETSONE



5 POINTZ



AGENSI ABM



SWOOSH PROJECT



AUGUSTINE KOFIE

PAGE. 100

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Dedicated to the brilliant, beautiful and bizarre. Whimsical tales, visuals and various odds and ends about obscure and misunderstood sub-cultures.





ZEUS40 [WILDBOYS]

AS HUGE FANS OF THE EUROPEAN GRAFFITI SCENE FOR A NUMBER OF YEARS, WE'VE BEEN WELL AWARE OF ZEUS40 AND WILDBOYS FOR A LONG TIME NOW. SEEING THEIR GRAFFITI IN MAGAZINES, FORUMS AND WEBSITES, THESE GUYS GO HARD IN EVERY ASPECT OF THE SPORT. ZEUS SHOWS US THAT HE'S ONE OF THE MOST WELL ROUNDED WRITERS IN THE GAME. FROM CHARACTERS AND LETTERS TO OUTSTANDING AND MASSIVE PRODUCTIONS. WE'RE HONOURED TO HAVE ZEUS IN THIS ISSUE AND WE KNOW YOU'LL BE IMPRESSED BY HIS STYLE AND VAST WISDOM OF GRAFFITI AND STREET ART AS A WHOLE.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: You and your crew have been painting for a long time, what has motivated you to paint for this long?

Zeus4O: In reality, not all of us we paint for a long time. I believe Resone [from Toulouse] is the one who has been painting the longest, he's been painting for more than 20 years of graffiti. After him, Opium's the next longest . He began painting around 1994. Then there's Pencil, he started around 1998/99. Finally we have me and Rota, who are the rookies of the crew because we only started to painting in 2000. The motivation that

keeps us to painting is our addiction to graffiti. I can speak for all of us on that. I couldn't imagine my life without graffiti. It's the only thing that I know to do. My work and my passion. It's one of the few things that makes me feel good, and without it my life would be empty and banal.

BBB: How has the graffiti scene changed over the years since you began painting?

Zeus4O: Certainly the scene has evolved a lot with the passing of time. New generations seem to be very talented, with great technique but

often fail to find their own personality because they do not start from the foundation of the graffiti. They tend to begin to paint following what see on the web. They are inspired from current writers who already have an established style that is the result of years and years of evolution, but for new artists, it's the beginning. Believe me it is not like that! It's necessary to study the pioneers of graffiti and with time and experience search their own style.

BBB: How do you feel the internet has helped or hindered the graffiti scene?

WB



“

BELIEVE ME, IT DOESN'T MATTER WHERE YOU PAINT. THE MOST
IMPORTANT THING IS IF YOU DO IT WITH YOUR FRIENDS.

”





Zeus4O: I feel like both of these things to be honest. The Internet has allowed the graffiti to become a truly global phenomenon because of it graffiti has spread to new countries and without the web all this would never have happened. If it did, it would have happened far slower. On other hand, it has created a depersonalization of graffiti [as already mentioned earlier],

the new generations have been drawn directly from the styles of the current writers, skipping the crucial step of the foundation. The web has made graffiti more accessible, but surely only the superficial part of it and not the historical part .

BBB: What do you think the best part about being in a graffiti crew is?

Zeus4O: The best thing about being part of a graffiti crew is definitely the social aspect. It's amazing how graffiti or another common passion can strengthen a friendship. When you are part of a crew, a real crew I mean, you become more than friends. You become brothers.

BBB: Do you feel that the variety of







styles helps your inspiration?

Zeus4O: Of course, you should never be prejudiced relative to the diversity in general and this rule applies even to graffiti. Personally I love all graffiti, from tags to throw ups up to the wild style and 3d style and this allows me to draw from many different sources and be inspired by them.

BBB: What separates your city from other cities you have painted in?

Zeus4O: I don't think anything, really.

The nice thing about graffiti is that wherever you go in the world there is someone like you that will make you feel at home. His city will become even a little bit yours, and all this happens because you share the same love for writing graffiti.

BBB: What's your favourite city to paint and why?

Zeus4O: Believe me, it doesn't matter where you paint. The most important thing is if you do it with your friends.

BBB: If you could only choose between, tags, throw-ups or pieces, which would you pick?

Zeus4O: Pieces for sure!

BBB: Do you feel that trains are just as important to paint as walls?

Zeus4O: I think that graffiti on the trains are the closest thing to pure graffiti. Maybe even more than walls!

BBB: If you were to blast a stereo next to where you were painting,







what 3 albums would be on the stereo?

Zeus4O: Ha ha ha, I couldn't really tell you off hand. But I can tell you that I hate very deeply current pop music like lady gaga etc. I generally listen to classic rap. All that sort of music that comes from the 80s and 90s.

BBB: Other than graffiti what other career choices do you think would be an option?

Zeus4O: Unfortunately, where I come

from there are not a lot of career choices. I worked various jobs, then when I was about 26 years old I had to choose whether to be a "normal" person with a "normal" job, or follow my passion, and I finally chose the most difficult path. But certainly it has been the most satisfying for me. Currently graffiti is such a huge part of my life that I don't see any other option.

BBB: Are there any projects, events or any other news readers should know about?

Zeus4O: It's a secret bro, but I can anticipate that in 2014 'you will have many surprises from Wildboys!

Follw us on:

<http://www.wildboys.it/>
<http://www.flickr.com/photos/zeus4O/>
<https://www.facebook.com/pages/WILD-BOYS/191957020883777>

Check some videos:

<http://vimeo.com/60032025>
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WE WENT TO AN ART SHOW IN MONTREAL AND THAT'S WHEN WE FIRST FOUND OUT ABOUT XRAY'S WORK. AND WE WERE BLOWN AWAY. HIS INNOVATIVE STYLE AND VAST RANGE OF MATERIALS SHOW ANY VIEWER THAT THIS GUY IS GOING TO MAKE A BIG SPLASH IN THE ART WORLD.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: How much did pop culture and media influence your childhood and shape your world views?

XRAY: Growing up in an American military family, television had a big effect on me. It was the classic animated shorts(Popeye, Tom & Jerry, Looney Toons, etc.) that I loved the most in the beginning.

Also commercials, movies, G.I. Joe, comic books, Conan books and radio. When I was a kid, TV was everything. It's also where we heard a lot of music in the early MTV days. My Dad would watch the news every evening and there were always National Geographic magazines around which was one of my favourite things. Skateboard magazines like Thrasher and Transworld were

another huge influence. American media culture from the 50's to the 90's is my general, psychological universe. Japanese media and culture is another great inspiration for me because my family lived there for a few years in my childhood and I loved it. I probably learned more from media than in school. Nowadays the internet is a great tool for exploration and research. Overall, It's made me

gaine an awareness of how the “art of persuasion” works. This has led me to always question what I see and hear and to seek out my own information about things.

BBB: Did these relationships help build your interest in art and creativity?

XRAY: Yes, very much so. Some of my earliest drawings were of “Star Wars”, “Transformers” and Disney characters. Skateboard art got me hyped to draw too.

BBB: Growing up with a mix of cultures such as native and military, how did learning about these cultures shape your individual ideologies?

XRAY: We lived in many different places and it really seems to have given me a bird's eye view about certain things. When you live around so many cultures, you start to see the things that are universal about people. Things that we all have in common as humans. One of my earliest memories is of being about 3 years old in Alaska in a museum filled with Totem poles and

taxidermised bears and stuff. I also have native American blood in both sides of my family and though I make absolutely no claim to that heritage, it's been a fascination in my life. I relate to the reverence for nature, balance and symbolism.

BBB: What led you into entering into the path of art versus one taught in your upbringing?

XRAY: It was inevitable. I was always the odd one of the family who would get in trouble for drawing weird stuff





"High Spirits"





like a skeleton doing a smith grind on a tombstone. I lived in my daydreams. I thought more about actually becoming one of "The Goonies" and finding a booby-trapped temple than about joining the Air Force.

BBB: What occurred during your teenage years to spark your interest in graffiti and street art?

XRAY: It was always around, especially in my teen years. It really came from skateboarding and listening to Beastie Boys and being around the Florida Hardcore music scene of the late 80's and early 90's. A

couple of my best skate friends in the scene who were a bit older turned me onto Graff in about 1990. One was a real freestyler with a wild style named HENTone. The other wrote SEIZEone and was amazing too, now he is a world famous tattoo artist. They hooked me up with a lot of oldschool mags like Can Control and 12oz. Prophet (and many more) and "Style Wars". The hip-hop movement in the 90's was like a tidal wave. We started getting up on I-95 walls, abandoned buildings and trains around town on the regular. We studied the history of the culture and put in a lot of work tagging and drawing outlines in our

books for many years. It was all about fun but we were doing really traditional graffiti (characters and letters). We got chased a few times by cops and climbed water towers and other crazy shit. We never even got photos of half of the stuff we did. It was before digital cameras. I would say that was my "phase one" in street art.

BBB: Many street artists got into graffiti through skateboarding, how did this sport help you get connected with the urban landscape?

XRAY: My body got literally "connected to the landscape" by

breaking so many bones on it street skating. It was really the graphics on the skateboards, the friends and the adrenaline of it that got me hooked. Skateboarding was all about having fun with friends, taking risks and doing crazy, reckless shit. Graffiti became a logical progression of that.

BBB: As a Montreal based artist, there tends to be a lot of focus on street credibility, how do you feel this plays a role in you exhibiting your work?

XRAY: I don't usually think about it much. I'm still going through immigration so I've been on good behavior and mostly doing legal work here. As long as I can paint, I don't care where. When I was starting out in graffiti (and hip-hop) culture there was a strong emphasis on paying dues and being true to the artform and traditions. There were some hard knocks and attitudes, people would occasionally test you. That's where the egos come out and though it made me try harder, it also could suck the fun out of painting sometimes and make you feel self-conscious about your expression. I finally came to a point where it is

just about making art in the way that is most gratifying for me and forget about everybody else. My art is more psychological than political anyway. I

went to jail in New Orleans for 24 hours for tagging and I only got my case dropped because there was a huge cocaine sting operation the same day and the court at O.P.P. was overflowing. I got shot at while doing a piece in Houston and I got a severe concussion after a run in with a rioting mob in New Orleans and was lucky not to be killed. A cop also beat me up there one time and cut the wheels off my skateboard with bolt-cutters then hit me in the back with it. I just feel lucky to be alive and to be making art now. It's funny how sometimes the people who have been trying so hard to have a "street image" haven't really done that much. When I do graffiti now, it's just for fun, a hobby. I make no claims about it. I think the most hard-core thing you can do is make sincere art and have a recognizable body of work.

BBB: On that note, how do you feel the relationship between fine artist, street artists and graffiti artists look in Montreal?

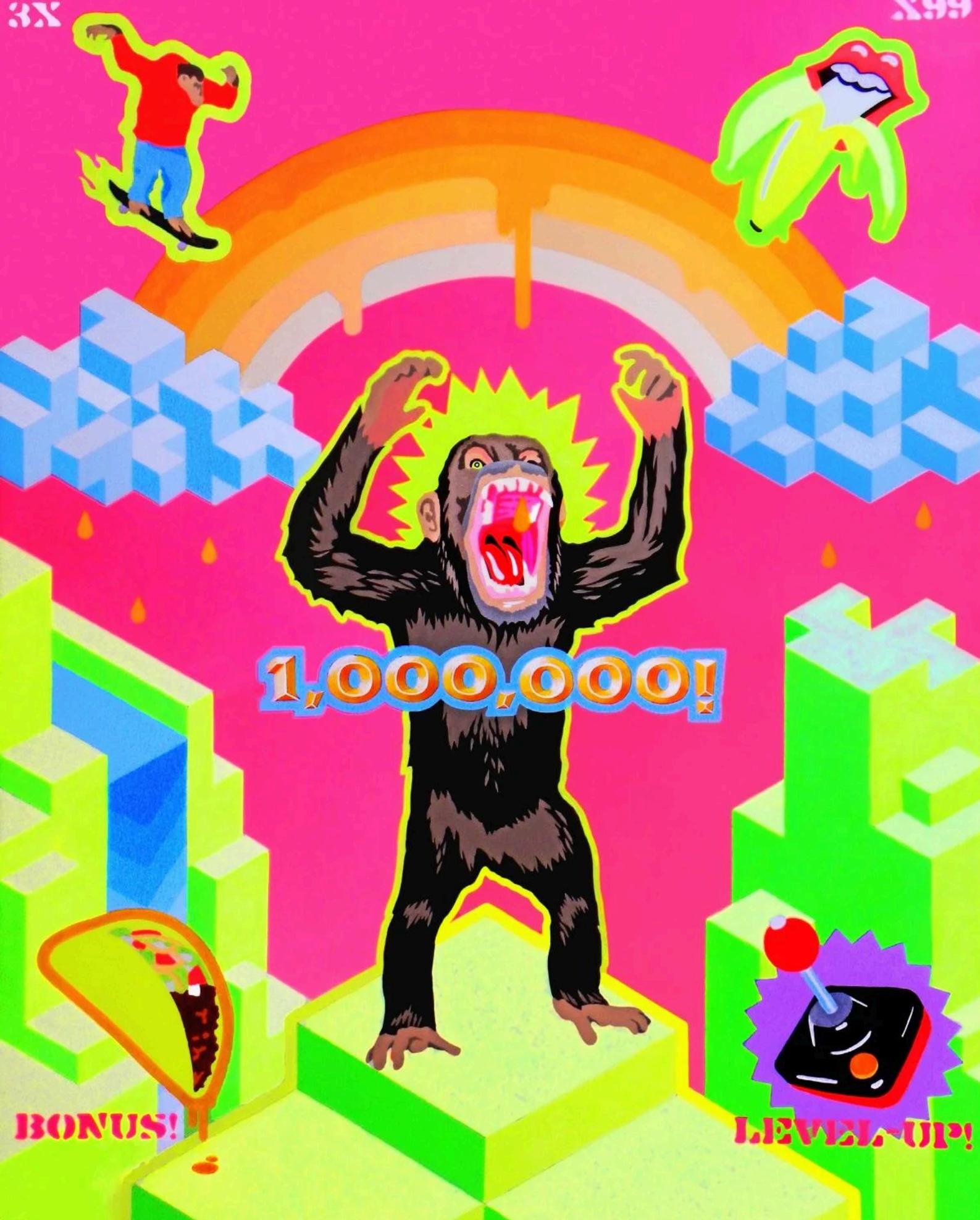
XRAY: To be honest, it's confusing as hell. I can only speak for myself and say that I want to make things that everyone can enjoy. Maybe that makes me a pop artist now but that is for others to speculate. My job



already did so much in my life that I feel I've graduated. I had a lot of scary experiences while getting up. Once

3X

X99



ONCE WENT TO JAIL IN NEW ORLEANS FOR 24 HOURS FOR
TAGGING AND I ONLY GOT MY CASE DROPPED BECAUSE THERE
WAS A HUGE COCAINE STING OPERATION THE SAME DAY



is to make the best art I possibly can and "let God sort'em out".

BBB: How do you feel Montreal compares to other cities in Canada and worldwide?

XRAY: I have only been in Montreal, Trois Rivieres and Windsor in the last 6 years in Canada. I'm not really qualified to much of an opinion yet! I hear Toronto is good too. I've been to many cities but Montreal holds it's ground(except for the roads). It reminds me a little bit of New Orleans because of the free-spiritedness, love of art & culture and a magical feeling I get here sometimes. It also reminds me

of Alaska because of the snow, haha.

BBB: What is your take on the role in language in the Quebecois cultural identity?

XRAY: NO COMMENT!!! I will only say I love and respect the local culture and local traditions :)

BBB: If you were to recommend 3 skate videos to watch back to back to back, which would they be?

XRAY: 1. "Blind: Video Days"
2. "This is Not the New H-Street Video"
3. GIRL Skateboards- "Goldfish"

BBB: What are your top favourite musical artists of all time?

XRAY: That is really tough, hmmmm. Beck, Buddy Rich, Nina Simone, A Tribe Called Quest, De la Soul, Daft Punk, Kings of Convenience, Thelonious Monk, Rachmaninoff, Radiohead, MadLib, MF Doom, Beastie Boys, Eric B & Rakim, Elliot Smith, EPMD ...there are so many, this list could be 10 pages long...

BBB: Any last thoughts?

XRAY: Ganbarimasu! Thanks for the interview!!!

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new formula...
WET PAINT
now with
EXTRA LEAD

**TA GUEULE
PIS
EINTURE**

**Old
Ghosts**

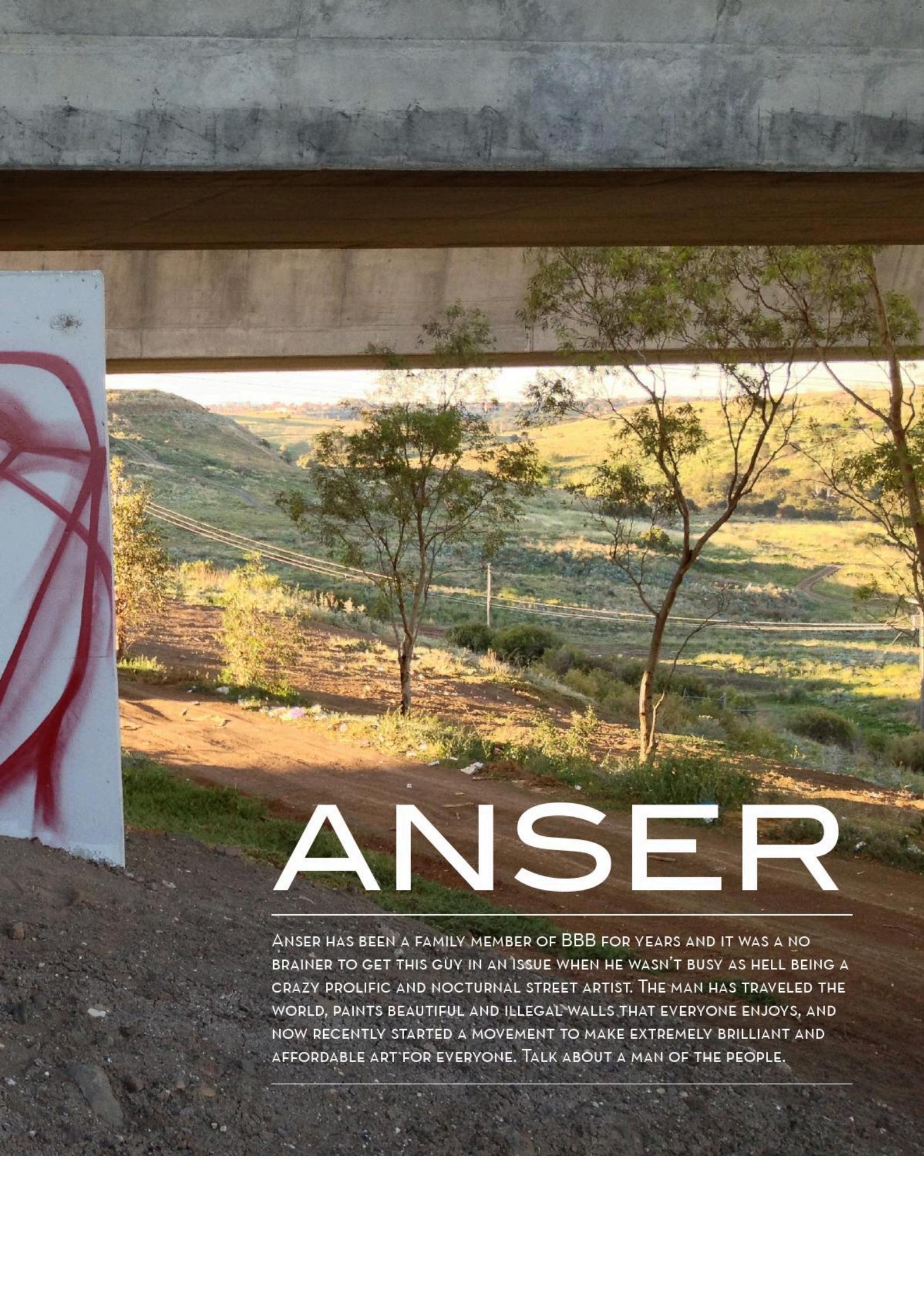
IS THIS
REAL
OR AM I
JUST

MAGINING

CLAIRVOYANT

**CLIMBING
HIGH**





ANSER

ANSER HAS BEEN A FAMILY MEMBER OF BBB FOR YEARS AND IT WAS A NO BRAINER TO GET THIS GUY IN AN ISSUE WHEN HE WASN'T BUSY AS HELL BEING A CRAZY PROLIFIC AND NOCTURNAL STREET ARTIST. THE MAN HAS TRAVELED THE WORLD, PAINTS BEAUTIFUL AND ILLEGAL WALLS THAT EVERYONE ENJOYS, AND NOW RECENTLY STARTED A MOVEMENT TO MAKE EXTREMELY BRILLIANT AND AFFORDABLE ART FOR EVERYONE. TALK ABOUT A MAN OF THE PEOPLE.



Bizarre Beyond Belief: Can you describe the origin of your painting aesthetic?

ANSER: One night when I was living abroad, I went out painting with some close friends. We were at a quiet spot that granted us more time than usual. I had always painted letters in situations like this and only done characters under the cloak of legitimacy. The one liner face is what came out that night, on a dimly lit basketball court. When

thinking about the influences, I would have to say Egon Schiele was a major one. About 6 months prior, I stumbled upon a major exhibit of his work. I saw him as one of the original graffiti artists, in an aesthetic sense, in the way he stylized and exaggerated his forms were really in line with the way graffiti writers manipulate their letters and characters. His line work stuck with me and I am sure seeped into my aesthetic psyche along with all the other influence swimming around there.

BBB: What is it in particular that fascinated you to paint faces?

ANSER: The instant connection it creates. My drive to paint faces came from wanting a more inclusive form of graffiti, one that the average person on the street could associate with. One that moves beyond cryptic letters, yet still utilizes the tools and methods of tagging. I try to find a middle ground between the artfulness

of creating something in the moment under pressure but also creating something different. The face was the fastest root towards that. I am not so much obsessed with faces but more with the power of connection that comes from the face. Beyond that, I find the amount of expression that can be captured in a face fascinating, while painting them even the slightest change in shape drastically affects the reading of it.

BBB: Can you tell us about any interesting brushes with the law?

ANSWER: There are few interesting and funny ones I have. Once I had

a broken leg and was painting (and biking) around. I was painting in a park when cops came through. I saw them from a little while off so I had time to jump on my bike but they knew what I was up to and quickly pursued. I jetted through some alleyways but I couldn't go very fast because of my leg. I heard them speeding through the street I had just come from. I was close to a 7/11 so I thought I would hide out in there momentarily, make it seem like I wasn't up to much. While in there I realized I needed some groceries, milk and eggs and stuff. As I was walking out, a cop car blasted into the lot, screeched to a halt right in front of me. The officers had this look like, "that's right we

got you" but as soon as they saw the grocery bags and the broken leg they assumed they had the wrong person and just drove off all deflated. One night I was painting under a bridge during a real bad rainstorm. Some cops spotted me from a road nearby and were camping out on the road. I flattened against the wall but knew they would be coming down to knock me at any moment. I ran further down the tracks and hid in some bushes. After about 10 minutes I started to get this insane burning feeling on my legs and ass, I realized I was sitting on an ant colony. I waited in the rain for another 15 minutes but couldn't stand the burning so I ran for it. As I got out



“

WITH THE WHOLE FORD NATION, BUFFING HAS REALLY PICKED UP IN TORONTO, THINGS DON'T RUN AS LONG AS THEY USE TO

”



I noticed cruisers at ever exit of the bridge just by where I was. Luckily a cab was passing by just as I popped out which I hopped into. I am thankful the rain was so bad, otherwise I feel the cops would of put more gusto into pursuing me. Another funny one happened while painting in Asia with a good friend of mine. We had this great spot on a riverbank but had to moved some trees to do a large swath of wall by the main road. What we didn't know (and google taught us later) was that fire ants often live by riverbanks under tree roots. Lets just say my friend and I did fill-ins while screaming "F**K, f**k f**k f**k f**k" the whole

time. I've never seen anyone paint so fast. I guess that is more the laws of nature instead of society.

BBB: Considering your following has grown exponentially, how difficult has it been to maintain your anonymity?

ANSER: Not too difficult, Instagram lends itself quite well to being anonymous, and I have some important people that help me keep it that way.

BBB: Graffiti art tends to be letter based, how do you feel your contoured characters play a role on the street against letters?

ANSER: I feel there is an interesting interplay between them. Being surrounded by letter-based graffiti puts these faces into context. They emerge out of that world. I'd like people to understand more about graffiti by looking at the faces and not fear or misunderstand it so much.

BBB: Sometimes your characters tend to get more elaborate, what do you find more thrilling, quick street sides or laid back piecing spots?

ANSER: The real thrill comes from making the more elaborate ones, on the intense street sides. Like the long





row of faces I did on Richmond Street, that was a real thrill. The face is about getting my graffiti instincts out, sort of a hybrid of impulses between wanting to create something of quality but also wanting to just paint the town red. Combining them both is the real thrill and that doesn't happen at the laid back spots as much. They can still be fun, more of like a canvas where I can work out ideas, try new things etc. The real stuff comes out when I am under

pressure, where no thoughts really enter the mind.

BBB: You've painted all over the world from Thailand to Halifax, what is your favourite city to paint in?

ANSER: It's hard to say, all cities have a different allure to them. Thailand was fun because any semi-derelict space was a free wall. At anytime you could come and paint, locals would bring a

beer and enjoy watching you. There wasn't the same stigma surrounding graffiti, it was just what it is, someone putting paint on a wall and trying to make a picture. All in all, Toronto would still be my favorite. I find it's a perfect mix of calm and bustle. There is still a strong rush when you paint but it's not too intense and things still get seen. Though with the whole Ford nation, buffing has really picked up in Toronto, things don't run as long

as they use to, but then again, it just means more walls are up for grabs.

BBB: In which city did you feel the most safe and/or the most frightened?

ANSER: Most safe was probably Thailand or oddly enough China, most frightened was probably New York.

BBB: How does your native Toronto

compare to other world cities?

ANSER: I don't subscribe to the notion of the world city. It sets up a false hierarchy that places a few select cities on the map while rendering the rest irrelevant.

BBB: How would you design your painting style to a blind person?

ANSER: Funny I did some with my

eyes closed not too long ago. They turned out horrible. I would say take a face and connect all major lines with each other. Eyes as ovals connecting to each other - eyelid to nose - nose cleft to lips- nostrils to eyebrows- eyebrows to cheekbones, which lead to the jawline, embellish as desired. Then I would give them a braille version of the face and they would be killing it in no time! Extra sensory perceptions and all, sounds like the perfect vandal. Got anyone in mind?



BBB: If there was a soundtrack to a night out committing vandalism, what songs would be played throughout your mission?

ANSER: American Beauty Soundtrack, haha no, I got nothing. Music doesn't really come into it. Maybe some kind of crazy Four Tet

album, slow ambient moments to intense sound mashing, seems about manic enough.

BBB: Is there any news or information that our readers should know about from Anser before we sign off

ANSER: YES! I have a show

coming up! I am trying to keep details about it secret, but do know, it's coming. I am doing some really different stuff, at least as far as materials are concerned. I think people will be pretty surprised! Keep your eyes peeled in the next 2 months for details. I'll be posting some stuff on my instadamage @ansermysteriousdate.

WWW.ANSERMYSSTERIOUSDATE.TUMBLR.COM









DICK CHERRY

WE FOUND OUT ABOUT DICK CHERRY THROUGH INSTAGRAM AND THAT'S ONE OF THE TRULY BEAUTIFUL THINGS ABOUT SOCIAL MEDIA. THE MAN IS UNBELIEVABLY TALENTED. CHERRY'S ILLUSTRATIONS ARE SO GOOD THEY LOOK AS IF THEY WERE DONE ON THE COMPUTER. ALSO, THE WOMEN HE MAKES ARE SO SEXY YOU CAN'T LOOK AWAY AND PROBABLY GETS EVERY TEENAGE BOY AROUSED. CAZY STOKED TO HAVE DICK IN THE ISSUE AND WE KNOW YOU'LL LOVE HIS WORK.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: How did your upbringing in Chicago help shape your artistic career?

Dick Cherry: Growing up in Chicago helped my work ethic. Becoming a working artist requires self-motivation, discipline and drive to achieve your goals. 10 years in the Chicago work force, gave me the foundation necessary to be a diligent, reliable artist.

BBB: Do you feel as if this was as significant as living in NYC?

DC: I have never lived in NYC, but having been the home of Roy Lichtenstein, Max's Kansas City and The Ramones, it's safe to say NYC was extremely significant to the artist I am today.

BBB: You're a big fan of rock bands like The Cramps and Rolling Stones, how did this shape the aesthetic of your art?

DC: The Cramps and the Rolling

Stones, drip sex, strength and attitude. That's the moxie I want to help set the tone for releasing the characters in my head.

BBB: Beyond the arts, did this music help shape your vision of the world and your personal ideologies?



DC: Yes. I think bikini girls, with machine guns, are quite hot.

BBB: Were there any other non-music, or art related, endeavors, which helped shape your personal

development?

DC: Moving to Los Angeles was a game changer. I had to face my fears. I packed up what little I had, said goodbye to everything safe and familiar and hit the road. Those 3000 miles, stripped away other people's expectations, allowing me to become the artist, and man, I wanted to become.

BBB: As we all know, becoming a professional practical artist is extremely difficult, were there any other hardships or struggles you had to overcome in order to realize your dream?

DC: I was my own worst enemy for a long time. It took years of "getting out of my own way" before

I gained confidence in my work. Painting after painting, the images in my head appeared on the canvas. Eventually, that process, allowed me to become more secure with what I have to offer the art world.







BBB: Your work ranges from flyers & illustrations to posters and canvases, is there a particular platform you prefer?

DC: Hands down, painting. It relaxes me.

BBB: How would you describe your creative process?

DC: Meticulous

BBB: Does the approach change among different media?

DC: Most definitely, that's what makes it all so much fun.

BBB: You also work in film, how would you describe the film industry in comparison to that of

the fine art community?

DC: The film and television industry is one of the finest, and largest, artist communities in the world. Working together project after project, we become a family. Each project requires artists of many trades and talents, having a variety of personalities and backgrounds, to collaborate on one final "canvas." This process requires us to be humble, respectful and open to other's ideas. Each day is different and an adventure.

BBB: What led you into working in this industry as opposed to others?

DC: I love movies. Who doesn't? The idea of being part of a motion picture, or television show, is something this latchkey kid used to

think about on a daily basis. I was in the right place, at the right time, and opportunity knocked. It was a chance to be a part of something big, and exciting, so there was no way I was going to pass that up.

BBB: Where does Dick Cherry see himself in 10, 20 & 30 years?

DC: Currently, I am creating pieces for a solo show called, "The Mrs." I have a few other ideas for solo shows I am work on in between the "The Mrs." paintings. In years to come, I hope to be invited back to galleries regularly, as well as, continue to be a part of group shows. There is something stimulating about group shows. Really gets my juices going! So, I definitely hope to do more of those in the years to come. As for the distant future, I will paint and draw, as long as I can hold a brush and a pencil.

WWW.DICKCHERRY.COM







Dick



MIKAEL BRANDRUP

[A.K.A “KETS ONE”]

MIKAEL BRANDRUP, ALSO KNOWN AS KETS ONE IS BEYOND JUST A GRAPHIC DESIGNER AND GRAFFITI ARTIST, HE'S AN ENTREPRENEUR. FROM HUMBLE ART BEGINNINGS TO OWNING HIS OWN DESIGN AGENCY, THIS GUY SHOWS WHAT DETERMINATION, WORK ETHIC AND WITHOUT A DOUBT, A TON OF TALENT WILL GET YOU. MIKAEL'S COLOURFUL STYLE, POSITIVE ATTITUDE AND BROAD RANGE OF TALENTS HAS MADE HIM ONE OF OUR NEW FAVOURITES.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: You have been creating art in some form for a very long time, what sparked your interest in art?

Mikael Brandrup: I have always been drawing and painting, though I really can't remember when I started. It feels like I've always been doing it! I guess my interest in art was a natural development of years and years of drawing, painting and designing.

BBB: What in particular fascinated you about typography and lettering?

MB: Typography and lettering is

for me a whole world/universe of expressing yourself. Your feelings, your mind-set, your thoughts. Translating this into a typographic expression and uniting this with art is what fascinates me.

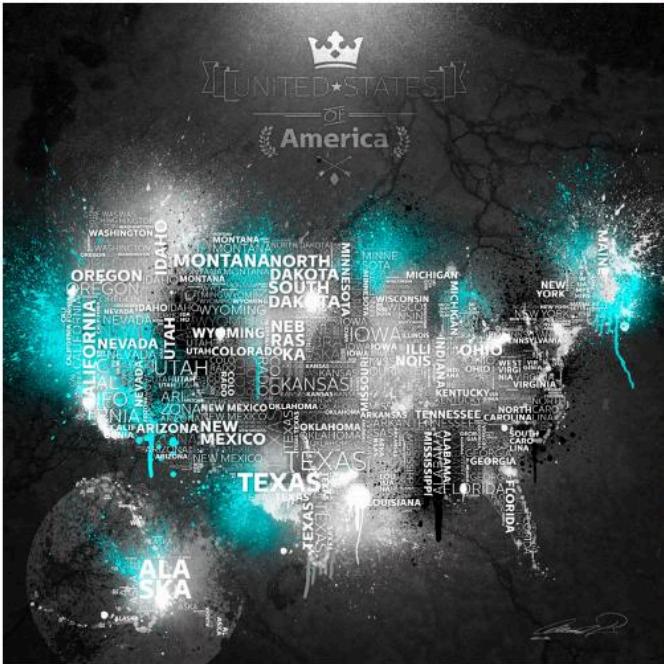
BBB: What captivated you about graffiti and why did you begin creating it?

MB: I was just 6 years old when I started to follow the graffiti scene in the early 90's with huge interest and in the late 90's I wanted to experiment with spray cans myself. I did my first "piece" in 1999, and graffiti was like

the missing part of my art/creative life. So since then I have painted graffiti as much as I could and in a lot of different parts of the world like New Zealand, USA, Spain and of course Denmark.

BBB: Did graffiti help push you toward your career as a designer?

MB: Sure graffiti helped me. Working with shapes, letters, colours, concepts and commission jobs since I was 15 years old. Graffiti has given me a lot experience and also inspiration and ideas that I can add to my other artworks. In that way graffiti was and still is an very





important part of my career.

BBB: As a student of graphic design and advertising, did you feel that attending an educational facility was beneficial?

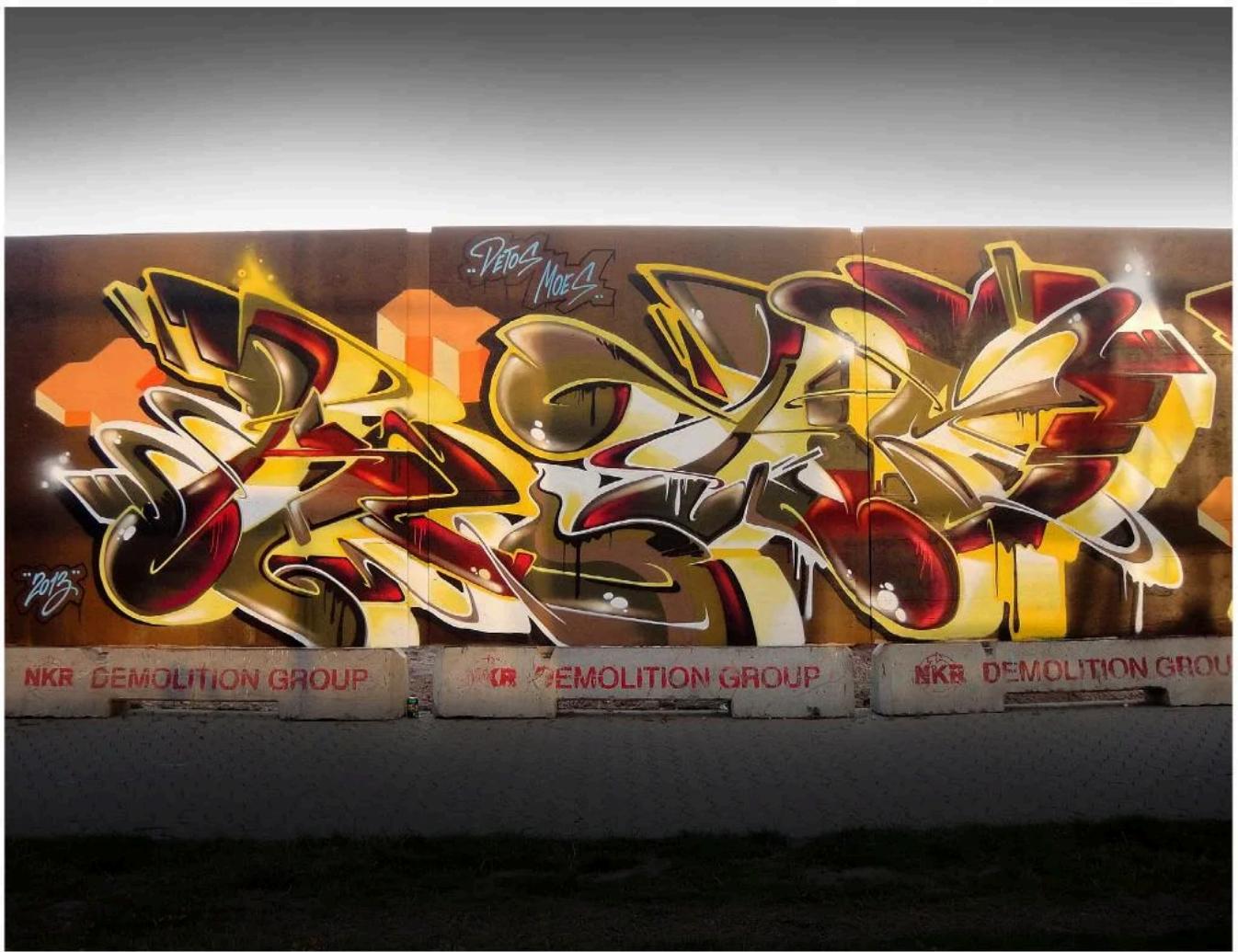
MB: Well, I started to study graphic design and advertising. But in the midst of my education I decided to start my own design agency. So I left my education, my apprenticeship and

the safe environment to live out my dream as an independent designer! Of course I learned all the basic stuff through the studies, but the most important things I've ever learned came through the challenges I faced everyday running my own design agency. It was pure learning by doing. You get a punch in your face and you just keep going. After 5 years, I sold my agency to focus more on my art and Mikael B.

Design. Those 5 years was the best education I could ever get, you can't learn that in any educational facility.

BBB: What would you say are the core differences between graffiti and graphic design are?

MB: It's hard to explain in just one sentence or so, I could write a whole book about this (a thick one)! Both graffiti and graphic design can be a







“

TYPOGRAPHY AND LETTERING IS FOR ME A WHOLE WORLD/UNIVERSE OF
EXPRESSING YOURSELF. YOUR FEELINGS, YOUR MIND-SET, YOUR THOUGHTS

”

lot of different things. The obvious difference is the tools you use. Roughly speaking, for me graffiti is more free and loose and graphic design in a commercial sense is more about rules and how to attract a certain audience. But I love uniting these two worlds.

BBB: Do you feel that graffiti has helped or hindered your design and vice versa?

MB: Look at my answer in

question 4...

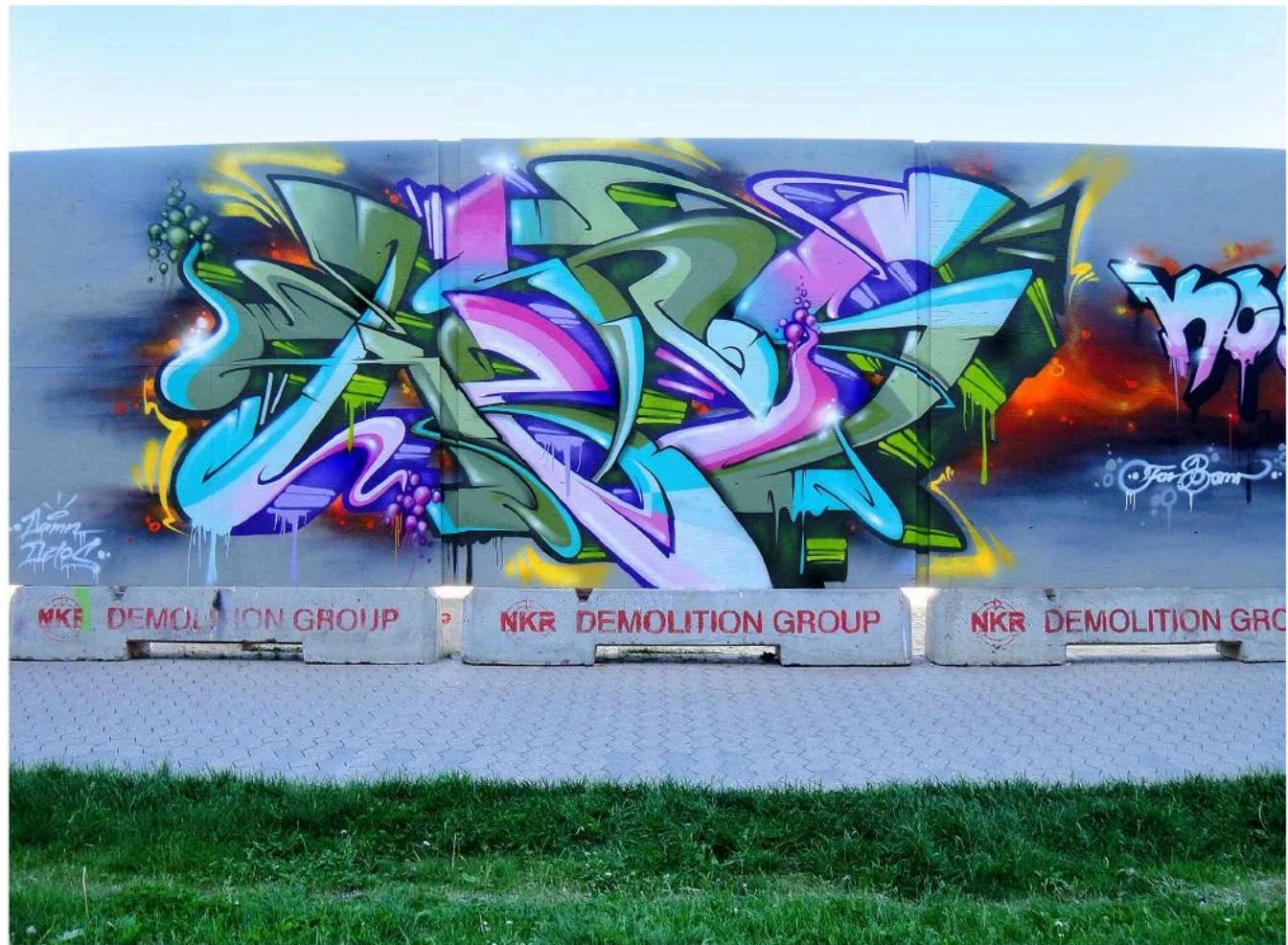
BBB: If for some reason you had to drop one of your skills (graffiti or design), which one would it be?

MB: This is like, "do you want to lose your left or your right eye?" HA HA! That question can't be answered!

BBB: As a Copenhagen based artist, what are the pros and cons to

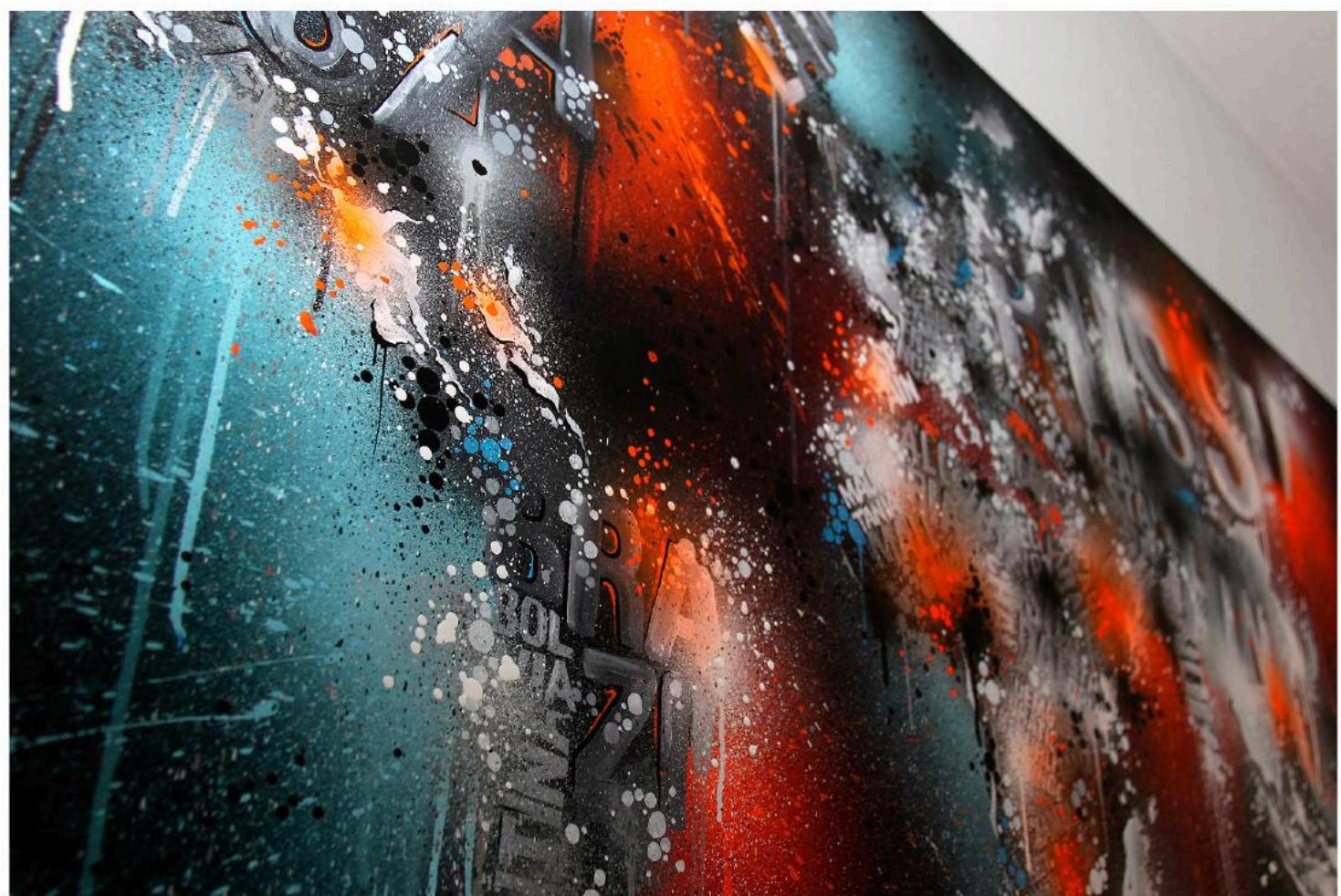
living and working in this city?

MB: The weather is too cold for me! Small city, which is why I travel a lot. Namely LA where I spend a lot of time. I have a great network, not only in Denmark but all over Europe. Being a Danish designer is very acknowledged and I'm proud of being one and I'm proud of the good reputation Danish design has all over the world. Copenhagen is a beautiful city, with lots of inspiration to gain.









One of my biggest art publishers is located here as well. I'm very happy to be Copenhagen based, though LA is my second home.

BBB: Why have you stayed in Copenhagen as opposed to moving to other major art cities in Europe such as London, Berlin or Paris?

MB: Running my design agency in Copenhagen with a lot of danish clients didn't allow me to move like that. But since I sold the agency, I finally got my "freedom". So now I kind of live in a suitcase, travelling a lot to attend exhibitions, do commission jobs, get

new inspiration and meet new people.

BBB: Outside of graffiti, street art and design, what keeps you inspired daily?

MB: A lot of stuff. Meeting new people, networking and working with other artists and designers across the world with a different view and a different approach to the art scene. Travelling and exploring new places, cities and nature is also a vital part of how I get new inspiration. It's very important to me to wind down and do totally different stuff than designing and painting. I love the night life,

restaurants, hanging with friends, movies or going to the gym. All this variety gives me a continuously flow of new ideas and inspiration!!

BBB: Are there any final comments or plugs you would like to extend to our readers?

MB: My passion is to spread beauty - what is yours?

I appreciate every single like or follower I get on Facebook or Instagram - also yours!

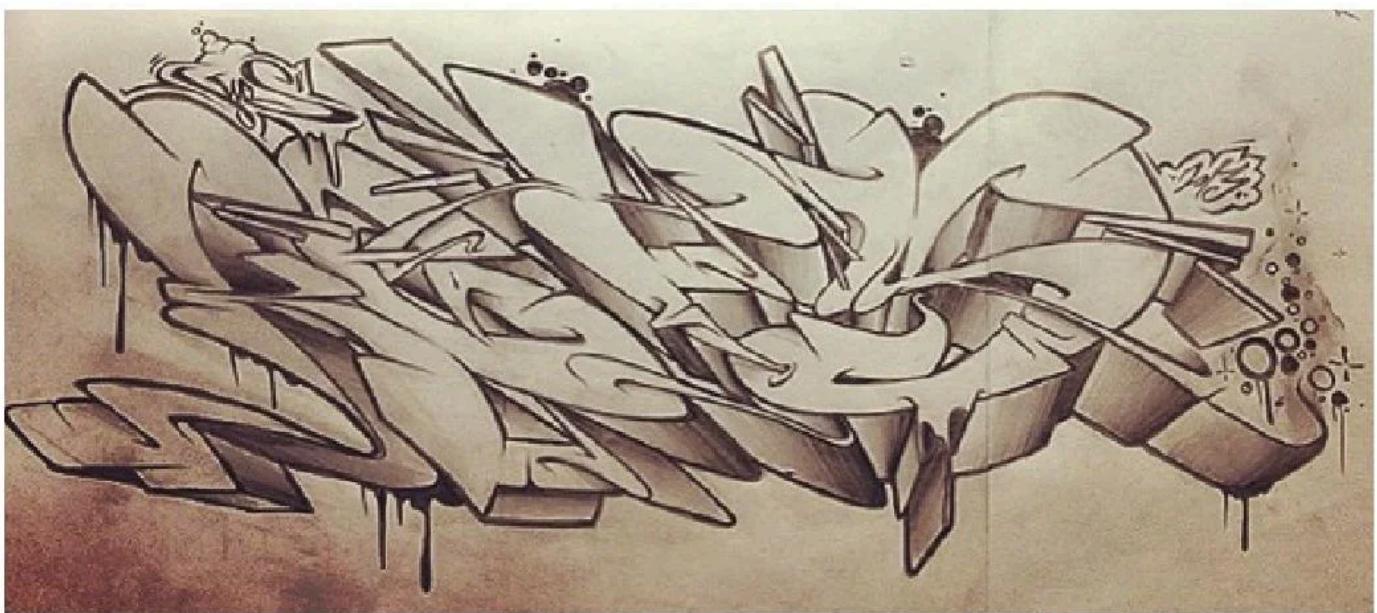
It means more than you know.

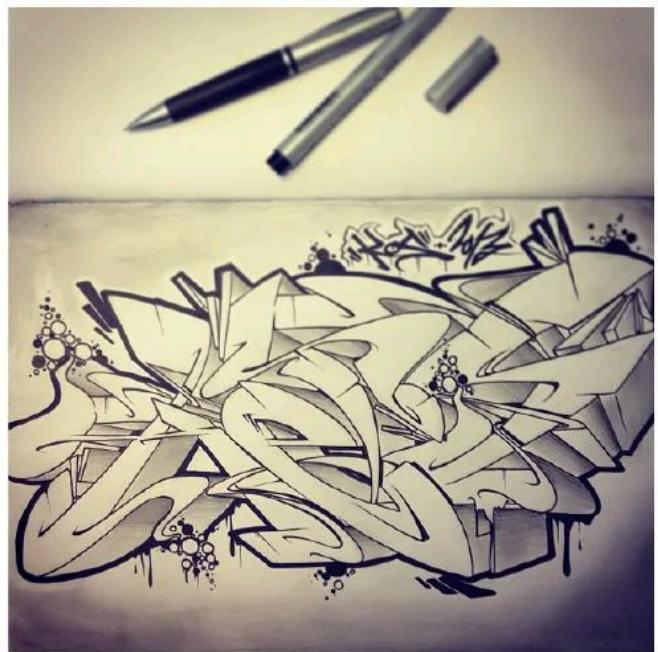
FACEBOOK: www.facebook.com/MikaelBDesign

WEBSITE: www.mikael-b.com

INSTAGRAM www.instagram.com/mikaelbrandrup

WEBSITE: www.kets.dk





BONUS INFO:

Mikael B. Design will attend the largest trade show in the art and framing industry - this years WCAF (West Coast Art & Frame). It will be held in Las Vegas, USA on 20-22 Jan 2014 in Paris Las Vegas Hotel.
If you're a true art lover you should definitely drop by!



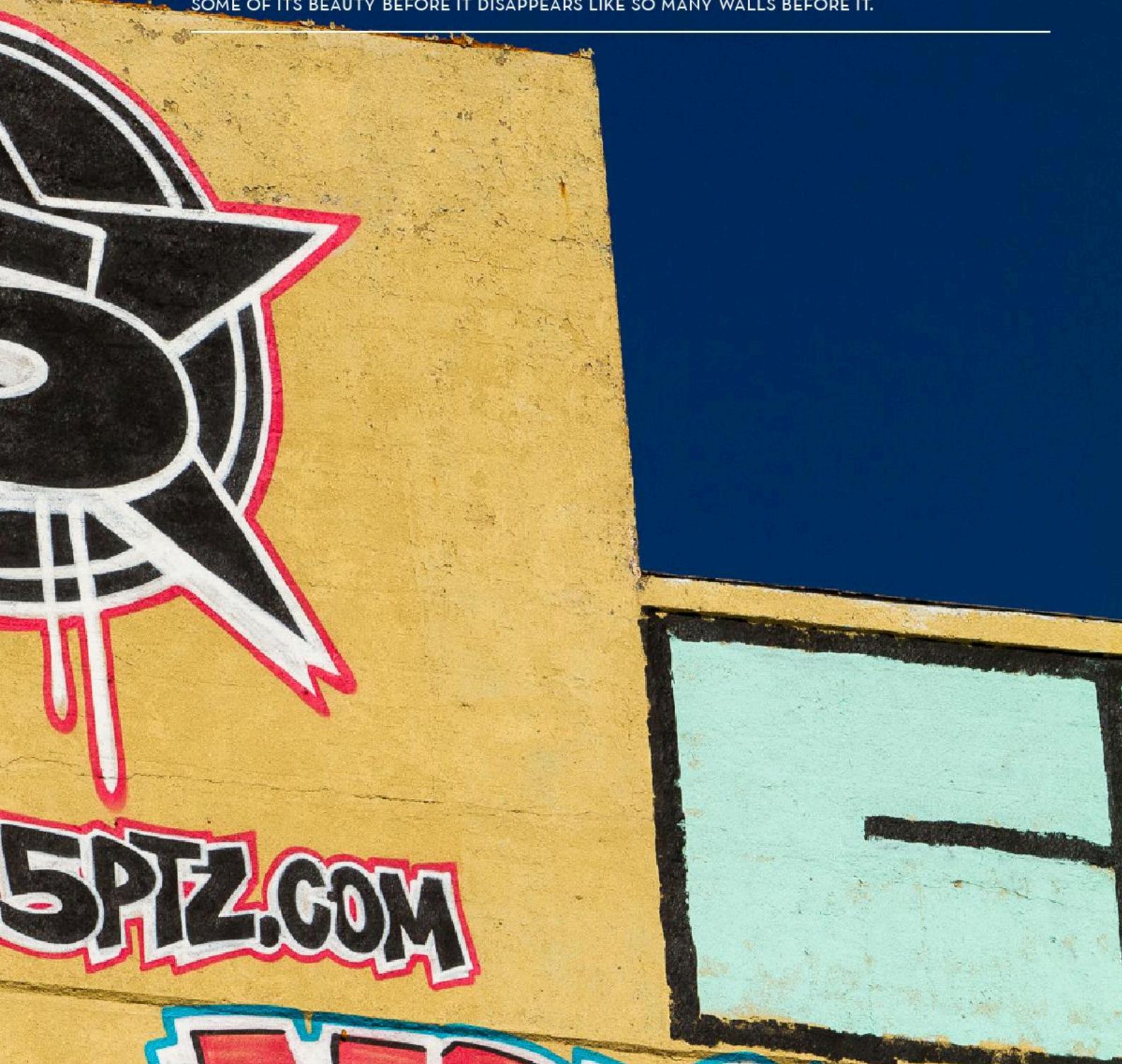




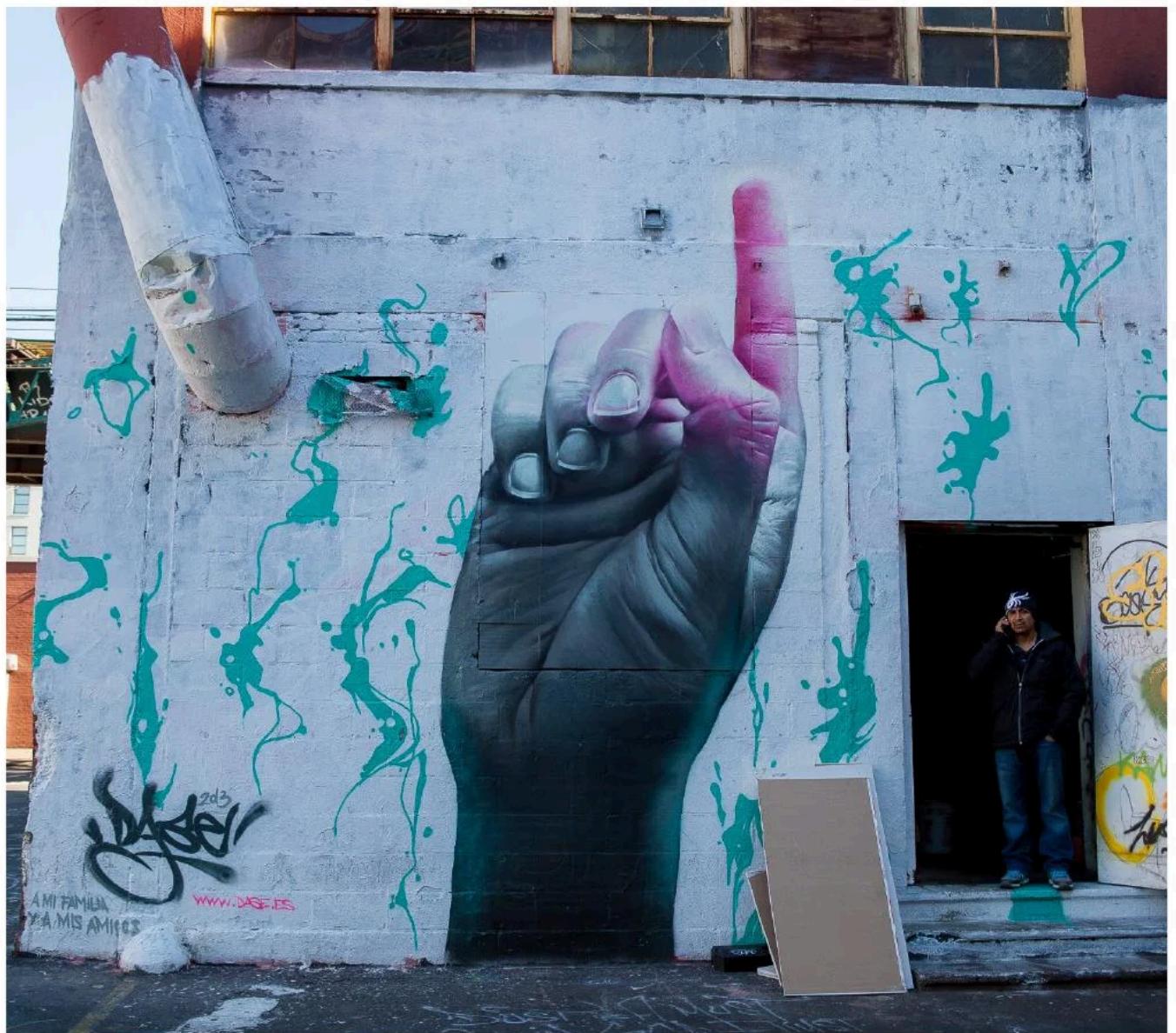


5 Pointz NYC

CONSIDERED TO BE THE "MECCA OF GRAFFITI", 5 POINTZ IN NEW YORK CITY IS A MASSIVE STREET ART MUSEUM LOCATED IN LONG ISLAND CITY IN QUEENS, NEW YORK. THE WALLS OF THIS URBAN ART MONUMENT HAS BEEN GRACED BY SOME OF THE BEST PAINTERS FROM ACROSS THE GLOBE AND NEW YORK CITY. HOWEVER, PLANS FOR ITS DEMOLITION HAVE ALREADY BEEN WELL UNDERWAY. ONE OF OUR CORRESPONDENTS CRSPPHOTO RECENTLY WENT TO CAPTURE SOME OF ITS BEAUTY BEFORE IT DISAPPEARS LIKE SO MANY WALLS BEFORE IT.







RETIRED

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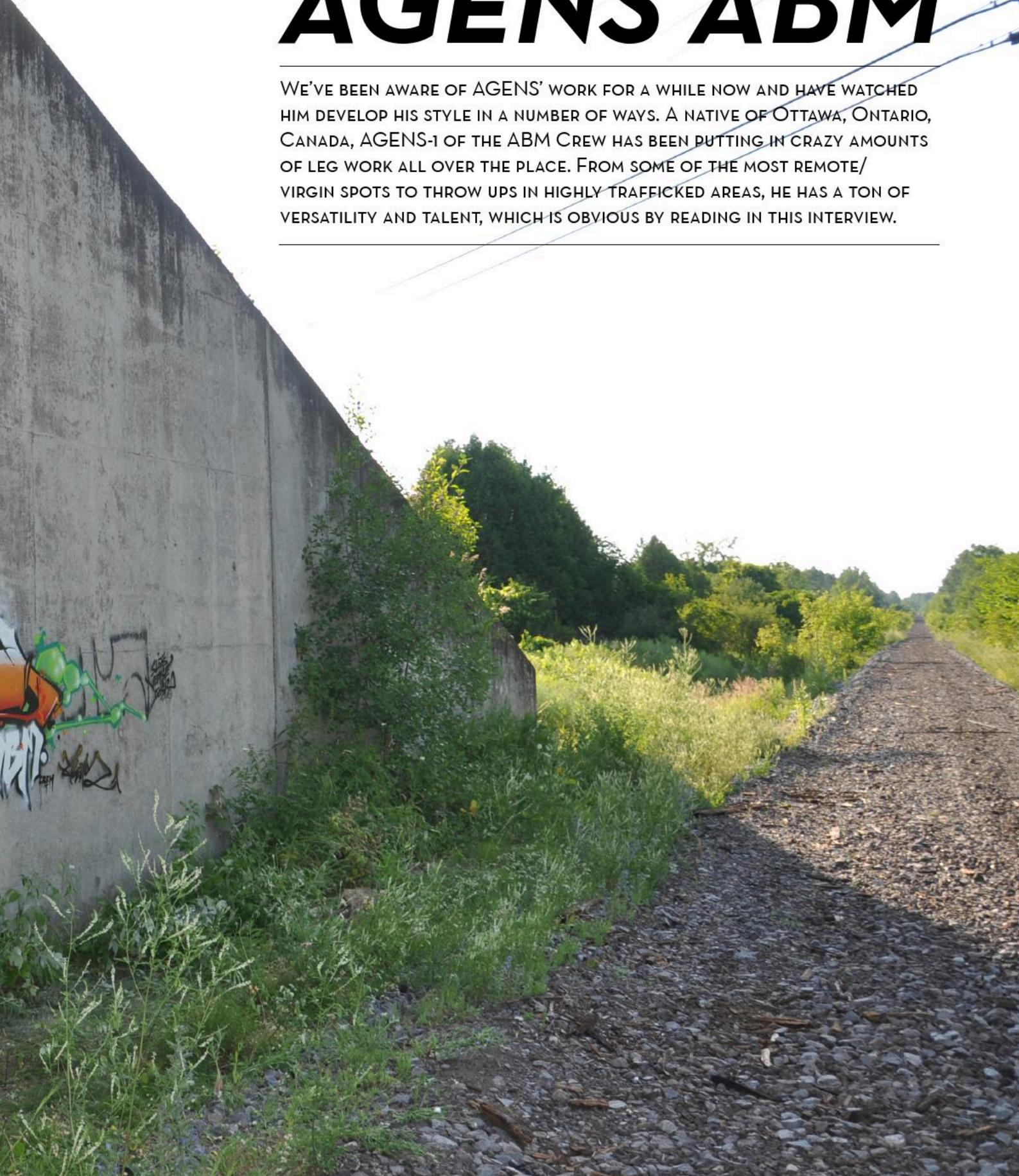
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AGENS ABM

WE'VE BEEN AWARE OF AGENS' WORK FOR A WHILE NOW AND HAVE WATCHED HIM DEVELOP HIS STYLE IN A NUMBER OF WAYS. A NATIVE OF OTTAWA, ONTARIO, CANADA, AGENS-1 OF THE ABM CREW HAS BEEN PUTTING IN CRAZY AMOUNTS OF LEG WORK ALL OVER THE PLACE. FROM SOME OF THE MOST REMOTE/VIRGIN SPOTS TO THROW UPS IN HIGHLY TRAFFICKED AREAS, HE HAS A TON OF VERSATILITY AND TALENT, WHICH IS OBVIOUS BY READING IN THIS INTERVIEW.





Bizarre Beyond Belief: Was graffiti your first interaction with the art world or were you interested in the field prior to graffiti?

AGENS: I was always into drawing growing up, so I wouldn't say graff is where I was introduced to the art world. But it's where I really took an interest in art outside of my doodles and sketches I was doing back then. Graffiti really grabbed my attention, took over my mind almost instantly.

BBB: What in particular fascinated you about the craft?

AGENS: That's a hard question to answer for me cause I started drawing letters and taking an interest in graff at such a young age, so I don't remember everything that grabbed my attention. I do remember the first letter I saw someone sketch up though. It was a lower case 'a' and it looked mean, like it had an attitude. Looking back now, I'm sure the 10 year old kid in my class that drew it had probably bitten it from somewhere! But emotion and feeling behind the letters has always stood out to me and I'd say that that's where I was really interested as far as the art form is concerned. I talked to the kid

in my class and asked him what graffiti was about and I don't think he said much, but mentioned a tag he'd done at a local underpass. So, I went to check it out after school and I realized that I could write my name on stuff too. Funny though, I didn't pick up a can for the next 4 years, just sketched a lot.

BBB: Being from Ottawa, what was the first graffiti or street art you saw and did anything in particular stand out to you?

AGENS: Again, I couldn't pin point whose graff I started to see when I

first took interest cause I was 10... and I guess my memory doesn't want to stretch that far back! But locally, once I started to recognize tags and follow the scene a bit online, crews like Alpheratz, DBS, and AS stood out to me. I remember a bunch of writers from my end of town tagging around once I had been painting for a while and being inspired to get up around my neighbourhood. None of those suburb dudes are active today though, for the most part.

BBB: Many graffiti artists maintain a double-life, are your family and/or friends privy to your illegal past time?

AGENS: Oh yeah! I think it'd be next to impossible to keep it hidden from anyone. To be honest I don't even care to try, this is a huge part of my life and I'm cool with it. Graff is always gonna be something I love to do and take pride in being part of. In the same token... is everyone aware of every

aspect? No! Haha... I'll leave that the way it is though. If people I meet are interested in knowing a bit about what the graffiti world is like, I usually make it clear that for me it's definitely more than scribbling my name on your mailbox at 3 am. I'm down with most angles of the scene, but my focus is on the quality of the work and the experience you get when you're out there painting.

BBB: Considering Ottawa is Canada's capital city and heavily policed, what are the conditions of painting graffiti there?

AGENS: It's not comparable to our next door neighbours Toronto and Montreal. It's smaller, and like you say, pretty heavily policed. The buff is 10x harder here as far as I'm concerned. When people ask me what Ottawa is like, I tell them how much I like leaving the city. You wanna know what's cool about Ottawa? Montreal is only 2

hours away. Don't get me wrong, there are spots that run and there are cool places to paint pieces, but they are far and few between. You hop in the car, and ask your buddy, "so where are we gonna paint?"... Here we go with this shit again. I go out of my way to paint my pieces in places that run and where I can chill out, pack a lunch, throw some beats on and get down on that sweet virgin concrete. I'm down for the experience, the day trip, the driving; it's all become a part of it for me. So yeah, check out Montreal next time you come to Ottawa to bomb lol.

BBB: How does Ottawa compared to other (relatively) neighbouring cities such as Toronto or Montreal?

AGENS: I guess I touched on that on the last question, but to elaborate on it, the scenes are pretty different. Of course they share the same typical graff bullshit though. There's beef, toys, legal eagles etc. just like any other city.





“IT'S A RAT RACE OUT THERE. I GOT NO PROBLEM WITH
PEOPLE MAKING MONEY OFF OF SOMETHING THEY LOVE”







It's big enough to consider it a graff scene, for sure, but I'm thinkin when other people visit from those close-by cities... they're thinkin, "where's all the graff?" We've got history here, maybe doesn't go as far back as the history in Montreal and Toronto, but there's some cool old stuff hidden around the city if you look. Numbers wise, I doubt we even have a quarter of the writers in T.O. or Mtl. But this is where I'm from and where I learned to paint graff so I'll always have respect for my city and the writers that came before me.

BBB: On that note, Canada or internationally, what is your favourite city to paint in and why?

AGENS: I honestly wish I had some crazy city to tell you was my favourite, but I haven't had the chance to travel anywhere significant other than Toronto and Montreal... yet! I've got a lot going on here in Ottawa aside

from my art, so I haven't been able to take off on any painting trips but I plan to and hope it starts this year. So, that being said, Montreal is the obvious choice for me at the moment. It's a wild place... trackside piecing walls, rooftops, endless alley ways... Mtl has it all. It's a beautiful city to visit in the first place, but if you're a writer, it's paradise! At least that's the view from a kid from Ottawa, haha!

BBB: If you could only choose one surface to paint for the rest of your career (trains, walls or trucks), which would choose and why?

AGENS: Virgin concrete. Hands down. To me, I just love the look of a piece on a raw wall. It pops off the wall so nicely, like a sticker. And it's not just the look that does it for me. You gotta mission into spots sometimes, or put your hip-waders on, whatever it takes to chill out at an untouched wall. And

you can't really mess up your mark-up! To me, that slight pressure of making sure it's bang on first shot is enjoyable and I come up with my best stuff when doing my first outline on a raw wall. Any surface is cool, but a crisp burner on a naked wall does it for me.

BBB: Whether it be through products, shows or commissions, what is your take on graffiti artists making money off of the craft?

AGENS: Cool with me, if you got skills and take the time to put the work in and put your art out there, I'm all for it. It's a rat race out there. I got no problem with people making money off of something they love. Why not? I haven't been able to put a lot of focus into that aspect of things myself, but I plan to this year for sure. I've sold some works and done the odd commission job myself so I'd be crazy to hate on making money off graffiti. I'm

thinkin you're a bit of a hater if you are against it! Haha... oh they're out there though!

BBB: Many people uneducated in graffiti consider it street art, what would you say to someone that says graffiti is street art?

AGENS: Hard to say a definite answer on this one. Depends on the person... I might not say anything if I don't care for them to know the difference! Haha but if I do wanna clarify I'll basically break it down to the fact that graffiti is about 1. Letters 2. Getting your name up! Street art is

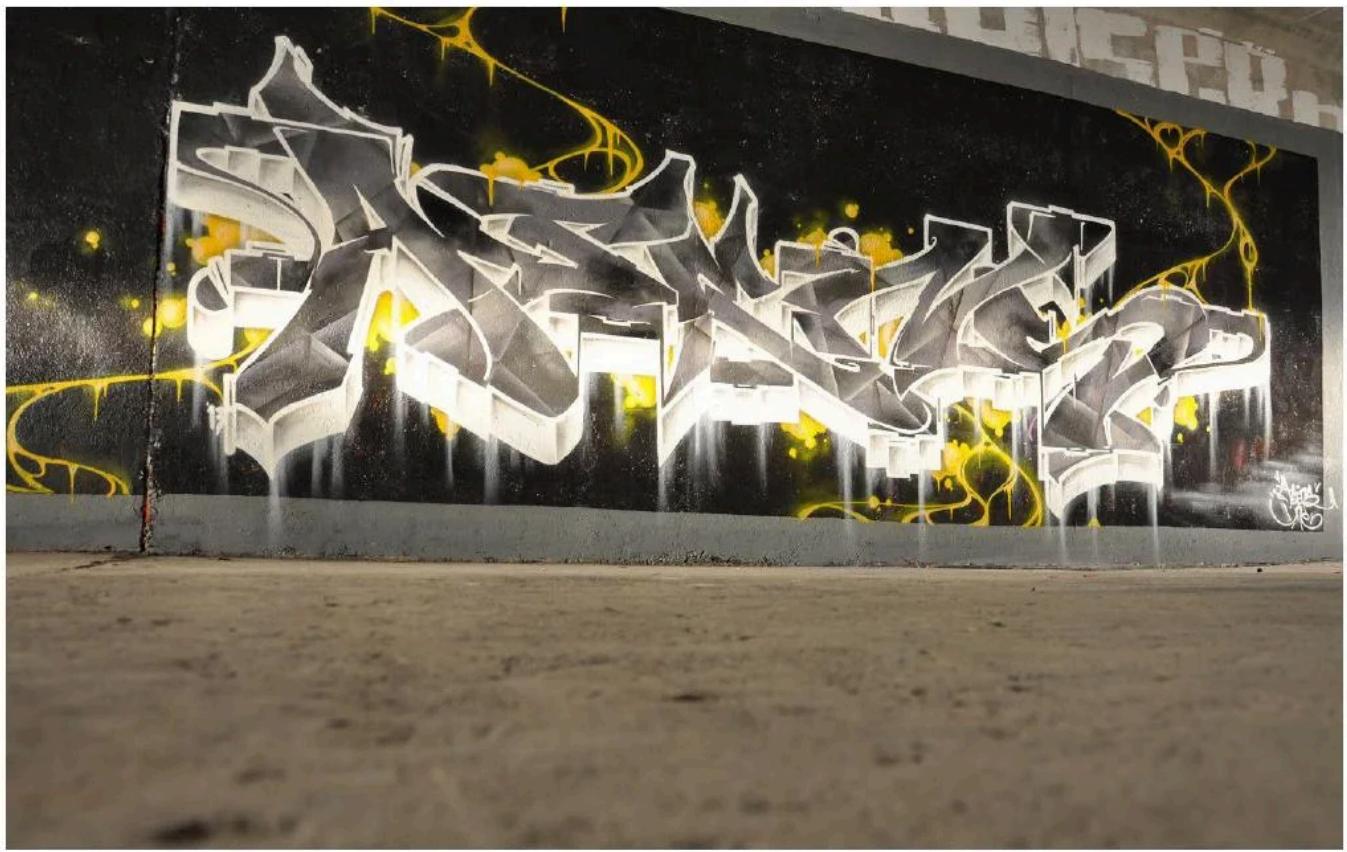
a bit broader... I don't pay too much attention to it myself. But whatever, I'm doing art in the street I guess... so call it whatever you want, the label doesn't bother me much.

BBB: What would you say are the core differences between the two fields?

AGENS: Like I mentioned, I don't really keep an eye out for street art myself, but the main difference to me is letters or no letters. Not that you can't use lettering as a street artist, sure you can, but as a writer that's what it's all based on. Style writing is a more

appropriate label for graffiti I think sometimes. I can't speak too much on the street art side of things, except to say that it's not graffiti. Graffiti is more of an expression of style and feeling through your letters. More so with pieces I'd say. But if you can get up, paint all kinds of stuff and you've got style and flavour to your letters then you've got it all. Graff is cooler, can i say that? Haha... to each his own eh!

BBB: To send us off, what has been your favourite piece you've created and can you give a background about it?





AGENS: Man, tough question. I'd have to say this piece below would be my favourite to date though. Started off on a drive with my girlfriend, who's been nothing but supportive of my graff since we got together. I knew of this spot cause I'd painted there a few times before and had some pieces running there. Wasn't 100% sure I was gonna paint cause I didn't know how much room was left on the wall. I rarely keep primer with me since

I paint a lot of virgin walls so it was either that or no piece today. Stuck'r in 4WD and drove right down to the spot. Some other dudes had taken most of the space left on the wall so I grabbed my hatchet outta the back, cleared the trees in front of the wall and drove over the rest a bunch of times to flatten it out. Ok, wall space achieved! Set up the chairs and got my paint all laid out, made sure my girl was chillin and dropped my outline.

The can I was gonna do most of my fill with turned out to be a dud and I nearly smashed it against the wall in frustration. I was considering leaving cause I didn't really see any other scheme that I wanted to rock in my paint I had with me. Haha... So I relaxed a bit decided to do something a little different and it turned out to be probably my best piece to date!

WWW.AGEN1ABM.TUMBLR.COM









TREVOR WHEATLEY

YOU'LL REMEMBER TREVOR WHEATLEY'S WORK FROM BEING FEATURED IN OUR PREVIOUS ISSUE. A DEAR OLD FRIEND OF OURS WHO IS AN EXCEPTION TALENT. TREVOR RECENTLY DID THIS CRAZY INSTALLATION THAT WE WON'T DISCUSS TOO MUCH HERE, AS HIS FRIEND ANASTASIA HOWE BUKOWSKI DID A FANTASTIC AND VERY ARTICULATE AND ELOQUENT WRITE UP OF THE PROJECT.



Trevor Wheatley, SWOOSH, 2013

Wheatley's SWOOSH is a work that both visually and linguistically embodies a kind of brazen cut – a dramatic, swooshing incision of branded design into an unmarked natural setting. Facilitating what he describes as “a new encounter with a familiar graphic language,” the man-made, billboard-sized installation playfully considers our negotiations with advertisements as they appear in public settings. Despite the fact

Wheatley's work ostensibly sells us no product or idea, we nonetheless come to draw certain associations with the Swoosh as a commercial signifier, a process that serves to recall the pervasion of abstraction and metaphor in contemporary advertising.

Assembled as a bricolage of salvaged wood materials and occupying an unlikely natural space for an audience of horses, SWOOSH raises questions about the place and nature of logos. As Wheatley seemingly

presents a familiar pop icon in a new environmental context, thereby opening it up to the possibility of visual redefinition, it still remains fully grounded in its original commercial identity. Constructed purely for the Internet, the completed work comes to resemble a sort of advertisement in its own right, reminding us that design is never neutral and that logos ultimately cannot be detached from the promotion of goods.

- Anastasia Howe Bukowski

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BIZARREBEYONDBELIEF

97







AUGUSTINE KOFIE

WE COULD PROBABLY WRITE FOR PAGES AND PAGES ABOUT THIS MAN AUGUSTINE KOFIE, BUT WE WILL LET HIS WORK SPEAK FOR ITSELF. KOFIE HAS SKILLS THAT MOST GRAFFITI ARTISTS COULD ONLY DREAM FOR AND IS ONE OF THE MOST AMBITIOUS STREET ARTIST IN THE GAME. KOFIE IS CLEARLY NOT AFRAID OF ANY SIZE OR OBSTACLE AND IS EASILY ONE OF THE MOST PROLIFIC WRITERS WORKING RIGHT NOW, BUT WE'RE SURE YOU KNOW ALL OF THIS ALREADY.



BBB: What was your first interaction with the art world and how did it affect you at that time?

Augustine Kofie: In the late 80's my mom's good friend Rita collected art and had some originals by Robbie Conal on display in her home. I didn't pay much mind till I started seeing his works pasted up on power boxes in the streets of LA in the coming years. He was a fine art and guerrilla poster artist who's works were political and portrait/ word based. I eventually met Robbie at one of Rita's bSunday brunches and he was nothing like I expected. He was the first street artist

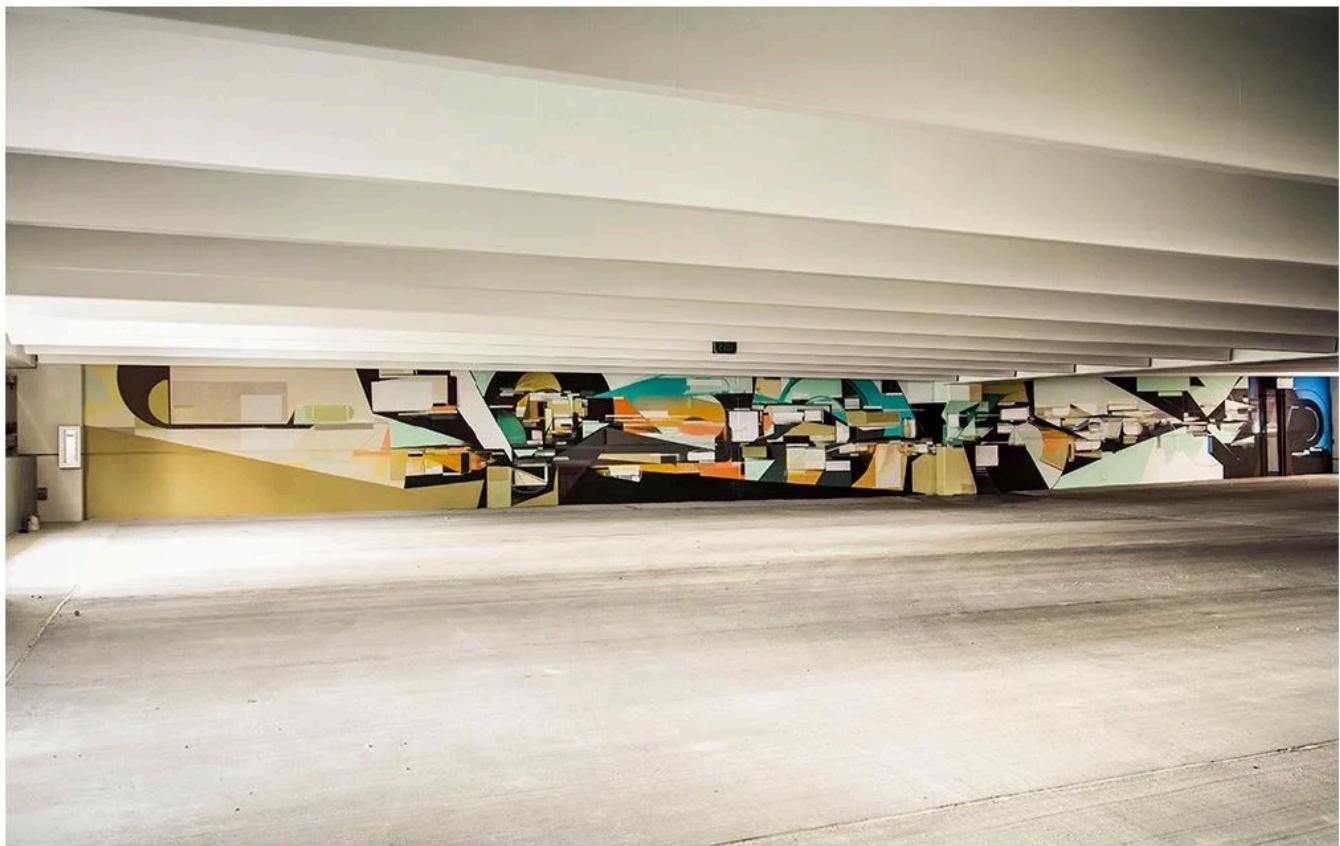
I had ever met and very cool with me. Here was someone who was active on the streets, a professor at USC, funny and down to earth. That made an impact as that mentality and direction contrasted the much more aggressive and dirty side of Los Angeles graffiti that I was just getting to know at the time.

BBB: Your mother studied fine arts at UCLA, how has she helped your career and ideologies as an artist?

AK: I dipped into her art supplies. She sketched a lot during my adolescence. It was common place to see her art

and I kept up that creative mentality, but pursued it heavy. I genetically inherited that right side of the brain thought process. She had a natural art ability especially with figurative and organic images. I tended to keep the organic theme going but took a more obsessive, constructivist approach. To say she directly helped my career wouldn't be correct, I pursued the career she wasn't able to have due to having children and my father's lack of support for her dream.

BBB: Many males consume themselves in sports when they're young instead of creating, how big of





a role did art play in your upbringing?

AK: I'm not into organized sports. I was into skateboarding street and that's about as sports as I cared to get. Art was always an activity I participated in both in and out of general academics. All my friends I skated with would draw, some better than others. Each of them knew writers or were related to one. We all dabbled into graffiti, some much more advanced than others. It was instinctual and a part of my life. I never considered being creative a chore or something I was forced into, it came very naturally. Art was also the activity I garnered much praise for by both my friends, elders and educators throughout my youth, so I was pretty

sure I was going to pursue some form of creativity for a living.

BBB: At what age did you begin getting involved with the graffiti community?

AK: Mid teens. My mom moved us to West Los Angeles in mid 80's. I was pissed we moved again and didn't care for the school nor the area that much. I eventually explored the surrounding neighborhoods on the BMX and discovered a graffiti yard called Motor. It was at the intersection of an old Los Angeles rail line and the 10 Freeway. I was floored. Rusty spray cans all over the floor, layers of tags and pieces, both mediocre and top notch.

I frequented the yard every few days and would see new piece mysteriously pop up. Occasionally I would watch writers paint, but not approach. I eventually started to practice there with a friend around 1991. I took the name Kofie in 1993.

BBB: As an artist who has been involved with this community for so many years, how has the field transformed since you began painting?

AK: I was lucky enough to see the late 90's era of graffiti culture in West Los Angeles, an incredible and pure time for the subculture then. Pre internet, Bus mobbing, pre imported

THE ABSTRACT FORM I PAINT NOW IS HOW I DRAW IN GENERAL,
DOODLES AND CLUSTER FORMS IN VARIED ARRANGEMENTS





NO PARKING
6AM - 8AM
TUES THURS
STREET CLEANING



spray paint, Can Control Magazine, true, tension laced Graffiti yards, crew battles, Melrose and HEX's Hip-Hop Shop. That will never be the same again, and I appreciate that time in my life. The culture has grown up and out of the early years, as most pure and young things do. The styles have expanded and matured. The speed

and aggression of styles has increased and Los Angeles is recognized internationally as a home to many a style-master. Roots run deep. Onward, upward.

BBB: Do you feel social medias have helped or hindered the art form?

AK: Both. I appreciate artists that curate their posts and shares. Quality over quantity. I admire well documented projects, well curated happenings. It's an information age we live in and we all desire knowledge and the goings on of good things. Not all that's on the information highway is quality, though.



BBB: Your work is innovative and original, what were your main inspirations for your aesthetic?

AK: Architectural renderings, vintage drafting materials, Italian Futurist movement, Constructivism, West Coast Hard Edge. I was curious to merge these styles with my letter forms

in early 2001. I also started a T-shirt project at the same time that focused on my illustrations and collage entitled 'Draftsmen'. I consciously named my web-sight KeepDrafting to house my works. It's a creative direction I wished to explore further in all of my art. Now, take all those things and add a driven and dedicated mindset to them and

see where it takes you. A continuing and ever growing experiment.

BBB: Many graffiti artists choose to paint letterforms or character based pieces, what attracted you to an abstract style?

AK: I began with original characters

because that's what I drew in the black books. I eventually gravitated towards letterforms because I always wanted to go there since I started painting with cans. I wanted to see what I could do with letters. I always wanted to be a style master general, coving all terrane. The abstract form I paint now is how I draw in general, doodles and cluster forms in varied arrangements. Straight edges and vintage templates. It is a true abstraction of all the works I painted in my 20 years of graffiti... It's a breakdown and a evolution of all

the things I love about letterform and the act of painting. Highlights, 2D's, outlines, bits. Instead of glorifying my artist name I wanted to focus on style, let the style be the signature.

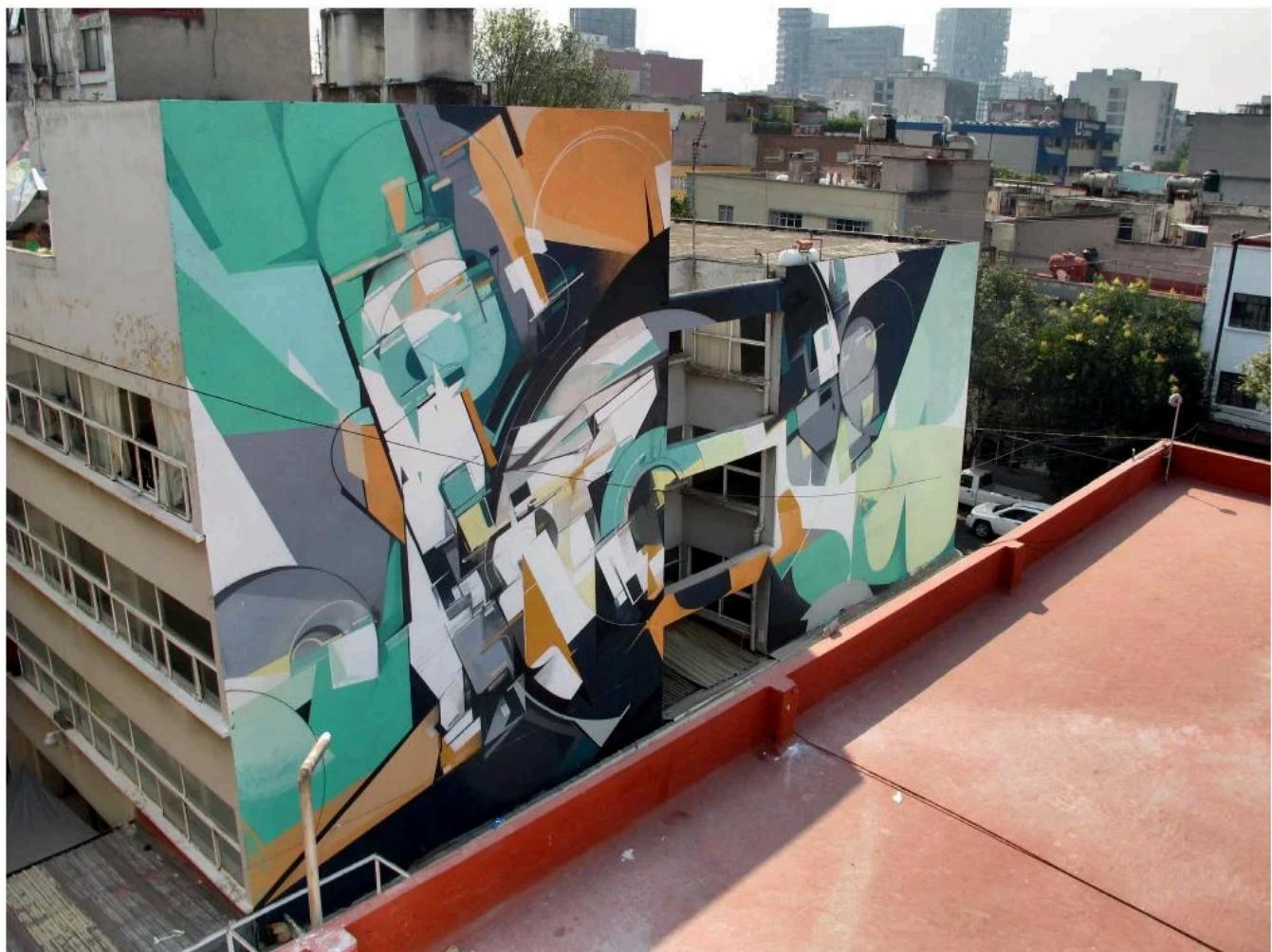
BBB: How do you feel your graffiti progresses or regresses your fine art?

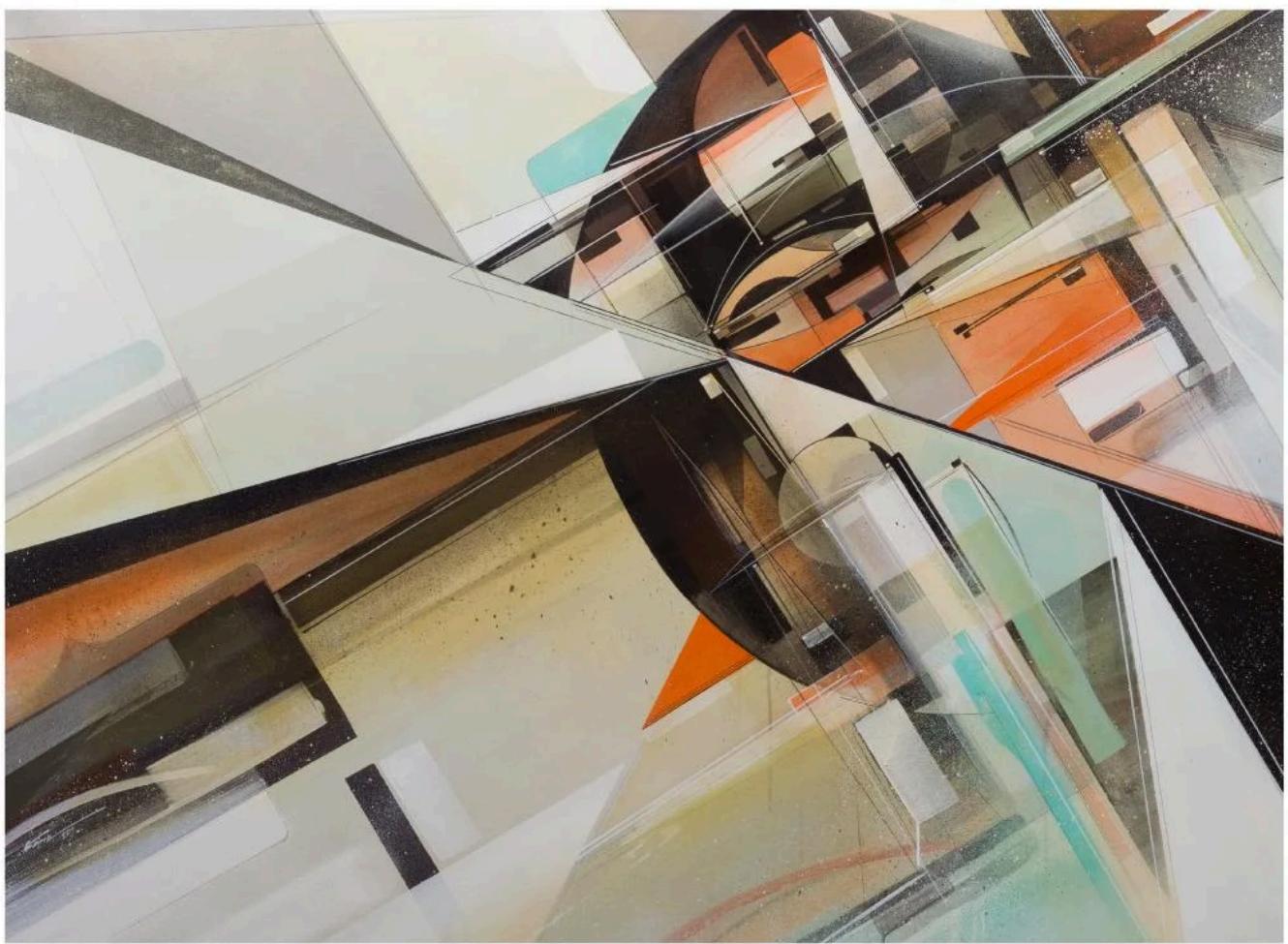
AK: Well, realistically I feel my fine art has progressed my public art. My public art is much more refined and realized then it was 10 years ago. My true graffiti however has regressed in

the sense of minimizing my materials and taking a minimal approach, conceptual in many cases.

My studio work and exhibition collections are case studies of styles. Observations of my interests and assemblage ideas. My fine art is the amalgam of all I've learned, a refinement of line, shape and form.

BBB: Many people correlate hip-hop music with graffiti, do you believe graffiti is truly one of the hip-hop "elements"?









AK: I always considered Hip-Hop to be a philosophy, one that I dabbled into more in my youth than in my adulthood. The writers and skaters I grew with in LA listened to Death metal, Punk rock, Depech Mode and ZAPP. I listened to Bad Brains, Suicidal Tendencies and Miles Davis because I was a skate rat kid. I was introduced to Gangster Rap by white and Mexican kids that skated and wrote the graffiti, and couldn't breakdance nor cared about the idea of Hip-Hop, but we were probably still more Hip-Hop than most.

BBB: Any final words, shout outs or aphorisms for our readers?

AK: The Private Sektor, Rapid Fire, Under the Influence, West Coast Art, Transcend, Agents Of Change I have a love for the refuse of the past juxtaposed against future-like line works. I admire works that are

timeless and even ahead of their time plus have their own beautiful & imaginative hypothesis of the future. I take great interest in the works of Phase2, Rammellzee, Dye5, MINER, Syd Mead, Leebeus Woods, Moholy-Nagy, Ed Moses, West Coast Hard Edge & the Futurist Movement. That idea of sampling the past (with respect for it) and manipulating it into a modern day manifestation is incredible and important to me. Sampling images, pulling them, then manipulating the samples through your own filter system in special way & producing something entirely new & unique from these found sounds and images. Taking from the past & manipulating for the future. That's the idea of a draftsmen and the way I approach producing my assemblage works.

My transition into fine art from street art was a natural one, but not planned. I didn't approach graffiti in the early 90's to make a living from

it, but I did know I wanted to make a living by being a creative person. I was 19 when I started painting under the name 'Kofie' and had no intention of the future and what I wanted to do. 10 years later I had managed to understand my strengths and my weaknesses in art and thoughtfully pursued a creative direction as well as career. Being that my art was rooted in my street name and I built up a name for myself, there was no sense in abandoning that, so I moved forward with new inspirations and a more mature direction. I titled my web-site 'Keep Drafting' in 2002 and the name of my company 'Draftsmen'. I was set to merge my artworks into a more architecture direction. My strength lied in my line-works and a natural sense of balance and colors, so the evolution from drafting burners on walls to drafting paintings onto portable surfaces was a slow process, but a beautiful harmony.

WWW.KEEPDRAFTING.COM









